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# MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES That Work!

This is a collaborative column by K-16 library media specialists and academic librarians who write about the motivational strategies that have worked for them in teaching IL skills.

## K-12

The following K-12 motivational strategies focus on different ideas school library media specialists can use to gain and sustain attention in the research topic. Some have come from recent submissions to the S.O.S. database of lesson plans and teaching ideas.

### *Make a Bold Statement!*

#### *Strategy by Natalie Anne Panshin*

**CONTEXT:** A lesson for 5<sup>th</sup> graders in which students learn about different kinds of alternative energy, then research and present on one of them . . .

**STRATEGY:** Teacher-Librarian begins the lesson dramatically by announcing "By the time you are old enough to drive, it will cost more to fill the car's tank than you will be able to afford." This statement gets their attention and makes the need for alternative energies relevant.



### *Dress for the Part*

#### *Strategy by Brooke B. Dittmar*

**CONTEXT:** A lesson about the Adirondacks, the rugged life of early settlers, and well-known early settlers and towns.

**STRATEGY:** Pique student interest by dressing up as an early settler, a woodsman or a trapper. Sustain their interest by engaging students in brainstorming unusual questions to research within the topics of early Adirondack towns, people, and employments. Sample questions might include: *Why were the "silos" built during the Cold War? How did the 1930 Winter Olympics change Lake Placid and the Adirondacks in general?* Thinking of aspects that are not commonly known and discussed will create greater student interest in the research topic.



### *Incorporate Popular Interest in Horror Film Genre With Personal Media Publication*

#### *Strategy by Julie M. Matz*

**CONTEXT:** A series of lessons in which 11<sup>th</sup> grade students explore the relationships between literature and its historical context including an introduction to the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe . . .

**STRATEGY:** Capitalizing on the intense popularity of the horror film genre and emergence of personal media publication (Myspace, YouTube, podcasts), this lesson plan strategy takes high school Juniors on a virtual trip back in time to read the author who created the literary genre that started it all: Edgar Allan Poe. While Poe used his pen to publish his tortured human nature, students take a Poe work of their choice and reproduce it in a twenty-first century media format best suited for its special effects. The combination of the horror/mystery/madness genre with technology helps sustain attention as students practice a number of information skills in the



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context of the curricular content. To get this lesson rolling on Day 1, students entered the classroom to the sounds of eerie organ music, a successful attention-grabbing strategy.

*Images for K-12 motivational strategies purchased from istockphoto.com*

## College Level

### ***Student-Directed Database Searching Activity***

***Reported by Lorna Rodio, Reference Librarian,***

***Massasoit Community College Library, MA***

Rather than doing a search demo, we divide the class into small groups and give each group a database searching activity. We ask a few questions about the search results on the handout and also remind students that we will be asking them about the searches. Usually each group will have members with different levels of abilities, so this has worked really well. Someone in the group will usually emerge as the searching leader, and someone else will seem to be the natural spokesperson for the group. The really interesting part to the students is when we talk about the results. The students will usually share what didn't work as well as what did and each group will probably be talking about a different database. I usually do the search as they talk about it at the teachers' station, so everyone in the class gets to see each search, but the demo is directed by the students. The questions I put on the handout are usually designed to illustrate the things I want them to consider: source publication, date, etc.

This teaching idea and corresponding handouts are available in the S.O.S. database:  
<http://informationliteracy.org/ideas/view/956/back/0>

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***Please share your "motivational strategies that work" with your colleagues by sending them to the editor at [mparnone@syr.edu](mailto:mparnone@syr.edu)***

